

Question on Notice

No. 565

Asked on 14 July 2015

MR BROWN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND PUBLIC WORKS AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L ENOCH)—

Will the Minister detail the improvements to mobile phone reception that will result from the Palaszczuk Government's investment in the mobile black spot program?

ANSWER:

Queensland will get significant improvements in mobile coverage with 68 new or upgraded mobile towers to be funded via the programme. Sixty-one of these towers are to be provided by Telstra, with seven (7) to be provided by Vodafone.

The Commonwealth's Mobile Black Spot Programme guidelines include provisions to encourage competition as well as coverage. Each installed base station will support a co-location option for other interested mobile network operators. Other mobile network operators may choose to provide coverage in these locations by negotiating a co-location arrangement with the primary tower provider. The State has encouraged mobile operators to explore this option.

Details of the anticipated coverage improvements to be provided by the seven Vodafone towers are still being sought. However, the following coverage improvements are estimated from the 61 Telstra towers:

- More than 17,000 square kilometres of the State will receive new handheld coverage.
- More than 30,000 square kilometres of the State will receive new external aerial coverage.
- More than 6,800 square kilometres of the State will be converted from external aerial-only coverage to new handheld coverage.
- More than 11,000 premises will be located within new handheld coverage areas.
- In an excess of 800km of coverage will be provided by towers to address specific black spots on major arterial roads and highways, with hundreds of additional kilometres of coverage to be provided on local/State roads in the areas in and around townships that receive new towers.

As part of the State's co-funding arrangement with Telstra, Queensland will also get 50 x 4G small cells that can be installed at suitable locations throughout Queensland. Telstra 4G small cells have traditionally been used to boost coverage inside heavily-trafficked areas such as shopping centres or office blocks, but their small size and short range also makes them a potential option to service hospitals, schools or isolated towns where big base stations are not economically feasible. Over the next few months, consideration will be given to the best locations for these 4G small cells.